

La Bohème

Giacomo Puccini

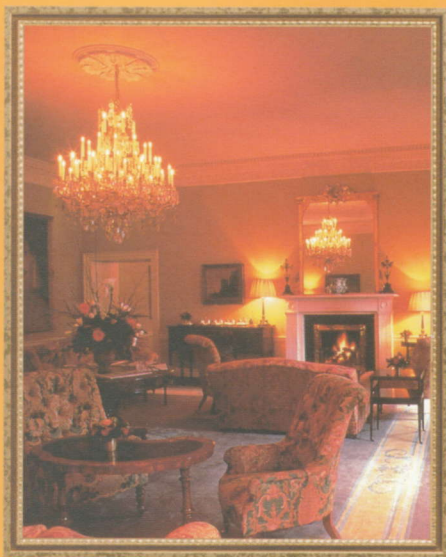
18, 20, 22, 24 & 26 November 2006 at The Gaiety Theatre



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presents

La Bohème

Giacomo Puccini

Sung in Italian with English Surtitles

CONDUCTOR:	Alexander Anissimov
DIRECTOR:	Porzia Addabbo
SET DESIGN SUPERVISOR:	Michele Zualdi
LIGHTING DESIGNER:	Tina MacHugh
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:	Carolin Steffen
RÉPÉTITEUR:	Dearbhla Collins

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Childrens Chorus (*Piccolo Lasso - Choir Director Ite O'Donovan*)

Gaiety Theatre, Dublin

18, 20, 22, 24 & 26 November 2006

There will be a 20 minute interval after Act II

Surtitle Translation

David Edwards

by arrangement with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden

La Bohème image by Patrick Redmond

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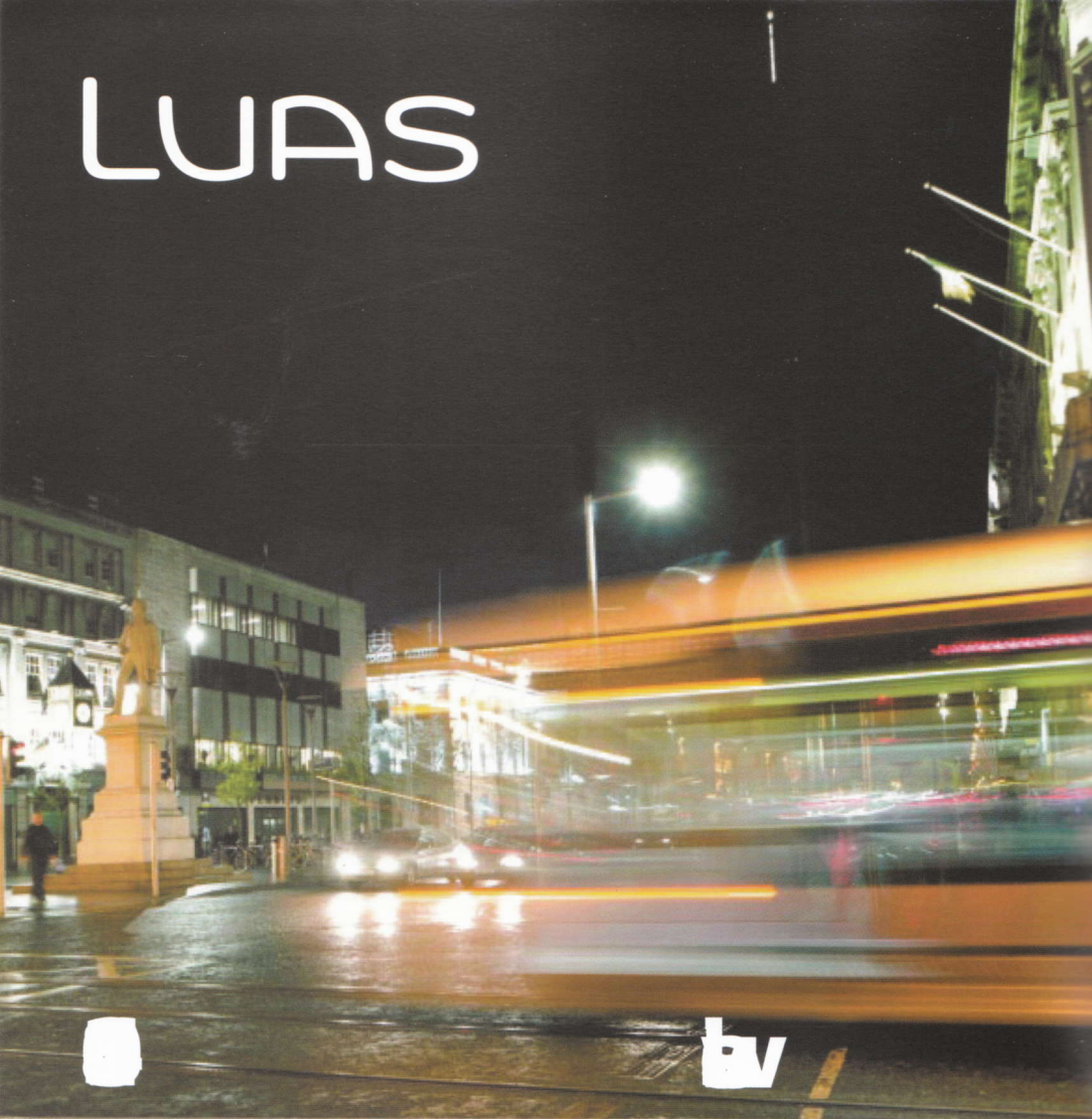


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La Bohème

Giacomo Puccini

Mimi	Fiorella Burato
Rodolfo	Andrea Giovannini
Musetta	Alessia Grimaldi
Marcello	Massimo Cavalletti
Colline	Paolo Pecchioli
Schaunard	Steffen Kubach
Benoît	Gerard O'Connor
Alcindoro	Gerard O'Connor
Parpignol	P J Hurley
Sergeant	Des Capliss
Customs Official	Lorcan O'Byrne

La Bohème was first performed at Teatro Regio in Turin on
1 February 1896.

*The first Dublin performance was given, in English, by the Carl
Rosa Opera Company at the Gaiety Theatre in August 1897.*

*The first DGOS production, sung in English was at the Gaiety
Theatre on 21 May 1941*



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La Bohème – a short plot synopsis

Paris, the Latin Quarter. In their garret on Christmas Eve, the poet Rodolfo and the painter Marcello are trying to work in the bitter cold. Their flat-mates, the philosopher Colline and the musician Schaunard arrive. The latter has managed to procure firewood, food, and wine. Evading an attempt by the landlord Benoit to collect the rent, they set out for the Café Momus, leaving Rodolfo behind to finish an article. His neighbour Mimi, a seamstress, arrives and asks him to light her candle. Her coughing and pallor arouse his concern. He pours out his life story, telling her all about himself and his aspirations. She reciprocates with her own tale: “My name is Lucia, but I’m always called Mimi”. Then moonlight suddenly spills into the garret and the girl is revealed in all her frail loveliness. Poet and seamstress express their love for each other.

Mimi and Rodolfo join the others at the bustling café, where Marcello’s on-and-off sweetheart Musetta turns up and creates something of a scene for his benefit. She gets rid of her aging admirer Alcindoro and is passionately reunited with Marcello.

Some weeks later, Mimi comes to the inn where Rodolfo and Marcello are staying. She tells the painter that she and Rodolfo have quarrelled. When Rodolfo arrives, she overhears him saying that he can no longer live with her. They agree that it is best if they go their separate ways. As they sing their tender farewells, they are interrupted by the rather more acrimonious departure of Marcello and Musetta.

Back in the garrett, both men muse on their lost sweethearts. Spirits rise when Colline and Schaunard arrive, but the merry mood is shattered by the sudden entry of Musetta and a distressed Mimi. She expresses her undying love for Rodolfo and, after a moving episode of shared reminiscences, she dies peacefully.

Mimi and Rodolfo join the others at the bustling café, where Marcello’s on-and-off sweetheart Musetta turns up and creates something of a scene for his benefit. She gets rid of her aging admirer Alcindoro and is passionately reunited with Marcello.



Art, The Birthright of Everyone

Porzia Addabbo, who will direct Opera Ireland's 'Mountjoy *Bohème*', reflects on the project's origin in an Italian prison.

A director can allow himself only one film in a lifetime. For me, this was *La Bohème in Maiano Prison*, a place where normal rules of etiquette do not apply. A rendition of coarse poetry that becomes art cannot be categorised; it seeks neither pity nor commiseration. And so a prison changes its role; it becomes a theatre, the cinema becomes the fiction, and the staging becomes the most faithful portrait of the actors in the film.

Making the first project a reality was possible only because of the generosity of the Perugian regional government in its role as co-ordinator and financier. This role was taken on by the Irish government in bringing the Dublin project into being.

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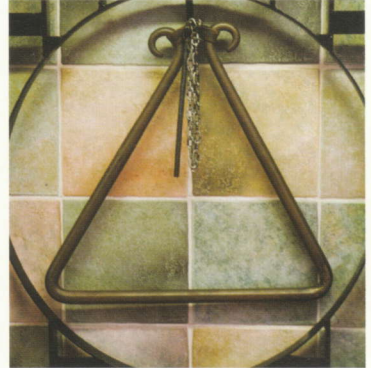
But the screen should not be the only medium that gets the opportunity to show the 'free world' how it really is. I finished the shooting of the film with the evident wishes of the 'actors' that all that had been thought, designed and carried out should find its logical conclusion in a performance of the opera. So that this could become a reality, much work was necessary over the course of a year by a great number of people from many different organisations and institutions. Other actors joined with those who had begun the project. They participated in a spirit of great enthusiasm, and many of the important decisions taken were due to their input. The great success

Creative freedom has overcome all constraints of time and space; our Bohème shows that even an 'enclosed' space can generate hopes and expectations, and that poetry, beauty and emotion is the birthright of everyone.

of this undertaking was due to their help, so much so that now all the sets and costumes are ready for their debut. Working in two realities, so different and yet so similar at the same time, has been an exalting experience. Creative freedom has overcome all constraints of time and space; our *Bohème* shows that even an 'enclosed' space can generate hopes and expectations, and that poetry, beauty and emotion is the birthright of everyone.

In a break with how things normally go, I as a director did not impose my point of view. Rather, I listened to the wishes of my 'team' of set and costume designers, a team managed by my fellow traveller, the extraordinary Michele Zualdi, keeping the promise he made to one of them of setting it in 1977, "a period still full of ideals, even if a bit muddled".

And it is their *Bohème* that I will stage at the Gaiety in Dublin.



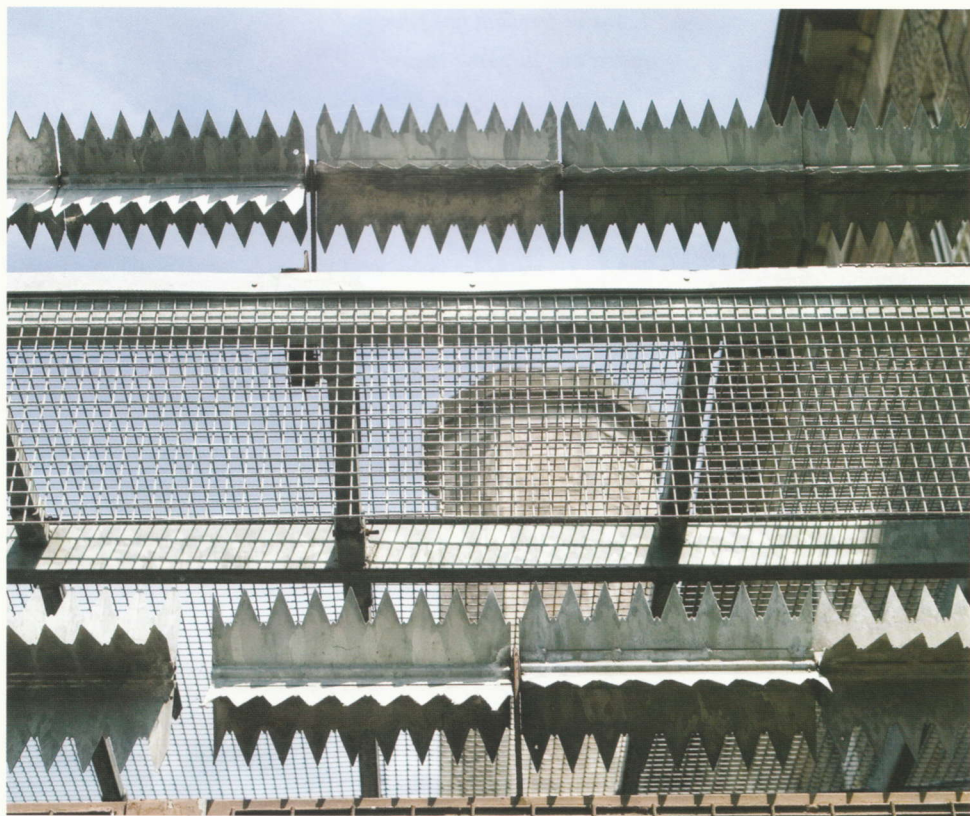
Two and a half years ago Porzia Addabbo made a one hour documentary chronicling the progress of detainees during a set-design course in Maiano maximum security Prison Italy. Porzia was intrigued by the relationships that were developing between the professional set designer and people from a non theatrical background and the possibilities that could be realised with a little coaching and encouragement "I saw real talent and passion from the detainees whilst I was making the documentary, I also saw a real desire to continue learning and growing in the field of the arts". Freelance producer Joe Mitchell heard about the project from a casual email from Porzia and found the project so fascinating he visited Maiano prison to catch up with it. "By the time

I arrived at the prison workshop I felt quite at home in the prison, there was a real energy and enthusiasm for the Set design work".

Following the visit, Porzia and Joe developed the idea of enabling the detainees at Maiano and Mountjoy Prison in Ireland to create sets and costumes for a live theatrical performance. Tonight we see the fruits of this two and a half year initiative, with sets produced from both Maiano Prison Italy and Mountjoy Prison Ireland.

Thank you "Opera Ireland" for working with us to make that idea a reality.

*Porzia Addabbo (Director) &
Joe Mitchell (Executive Producer)*



A letter of thanks

"On behalf of everyone who has worked on this project I would like to thank two hard working creative and exceptionally friendly people: Michele and Portia. These three great qualities of work ethic, creativity and friendship are in such short supply in this God-forsaken prison it was like a breath of fresh air having their bubbly personalities directing this project. It was a God send for me to get involved in the work, it gave me a direction, an opportunity to use basic woodworking skills that I had in a creative way. The first time we met your names, especially pronounced in the Italian, reminded me of Shakespearean characters. I think it was he who said "The world is a stage and we all must play our part ". Well, I for one am glad that you introduced the " stage " to my prison world.

My part, although small in the scheme of things, has made a great impact in my life...it has been a wonderful learning experience. As a metaphor for "living" building this set has been a revelation. Like life you are given a lot of raw material that has to be cut to size, shaped and designed. Building this set tested, at times, what work ethic we possessed. Whilst we put some back-breaking work into re-cutting a mountain of boards we found a camaraderie when one after another of the crew took over the painfully boring work with the saw. However with the goal in mind of the final set being created we set about the task with enthusiasm. Having a goal in life takes you a world away from the pointless monotony of prison life. But besides all the hard work what have I

learned? That working with creative people is inspirational!!!

At first I would get so frustrated at all the changes to the plans with something as simple as a chair. You get so set in your ways in prison by accepting what is “second best” because it is “functional” or whatever excuse. But watching a dedicated artist, someone who will not accept “second best”...someone who thinks outside the box...someone who can envisage the “best” out of that raw materials they have to work with... That is inspirational...and on behalf of all the crew who worked on the set I would like to say that Michele and Portia were inspirational. I suppose work ethic and creativity are gifts... skills that Michele and Portia have developed after years of perspiration in the Art world. However the one gift that all the woodworking crew and I would like to thank Michele and Portia for is the Friendship they share. Some would jokongly saythat it inspired us to work harder...but seriously,thank you Michele and Portia for a friendship that was truly infectious...inspiring us to do such wonderful things with the material we had...but a friendship that accepted us for who we are and got the best out of us.

The cultural and artistic course of Puccini's *La Bohème* has transformed the detainees of Maiano Prison in Spoleto into the protagonists of design and making of the production for a 1977 Paris edition as opposed to the original project of 1830. After having listened, interiorised and come to love the Opera, they decided to design the settings and costumes first as models and then in real size together with the Mountjoy prisoners. One does not have to be a cultured opera devotee to appreciate the overwhelming impact of Puccini's music. The libretto is drawn from



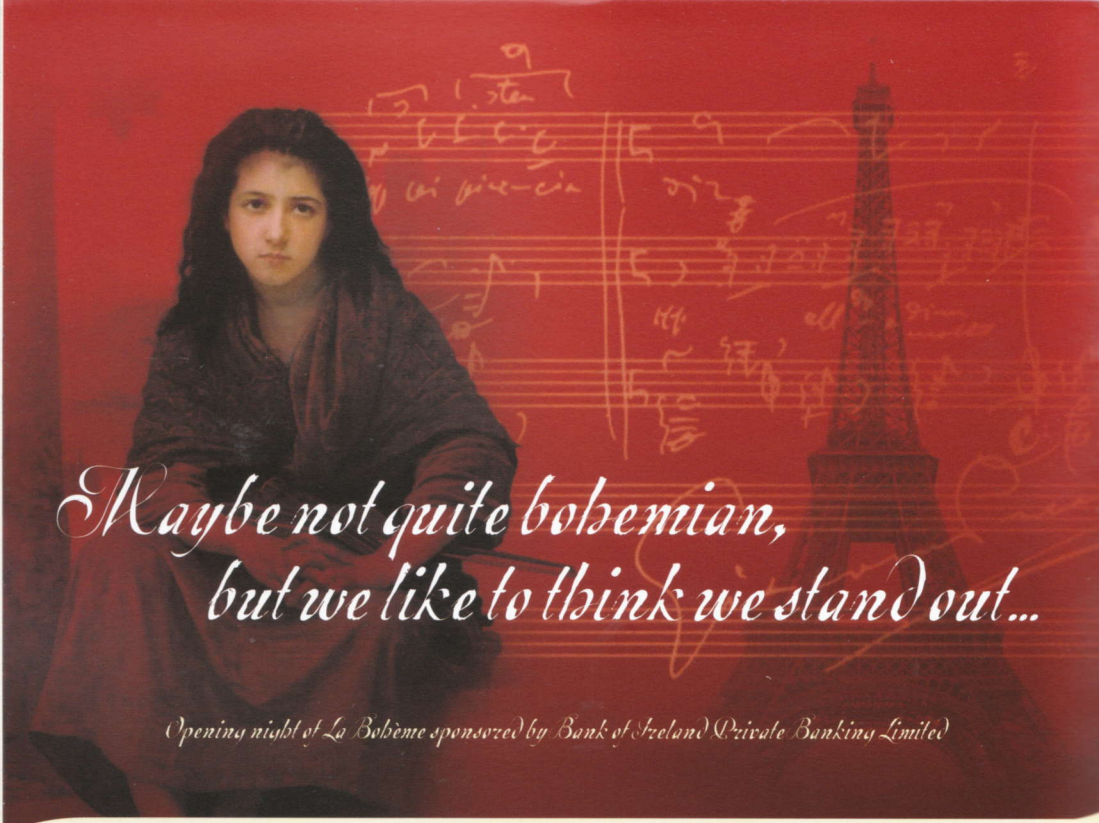
On behalf of everyone, Thank you Michele and Portia...and to misquote the lead singer from *La Bohème*... “Che gelida manina” (This little hand is frozen) with all this writing which I am not accustomed to.”

*Inmate from Mountjoy Prison
who worked on the project.*

novel from Henry Murger “*Scenes de la vie de Bohème*” which stresses its literary and narrative power. But *Bohème* above all – as all melodrama – emphasizes wretched protagonists, artists in our case, belonging to needy social classes in striking contrast to the well-to-do.


This birth and often human destiny is a confined social fringe becomes metaphor of captivity from which, even with *Bohème*, one can escape.






*Pier Luigi Neri
Provincia di Perugia*



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The writers not so much made an adaptation of Murger as a respinning of his tales from various strands, a description here, an incident there.

Putting Murger's scènes to music

Henri Murger, the author of the tales upon which *La Bohème* is based, began and ended his life where he felt he most belonged – among the poor in the attics of Paris. Murger was the son of a French tailor and began writing very young. By age nineteen he was already published, and soon became an assistant to the writer Alexei Tolstoy, cousin to the famed Count Tolstoy. This employment soon ended, however, and that is when he moved into the garrets of the Left Bank of Paris. It was while writing for the local magazine, *Le Corsaire*, that he began his series, *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*, the people he saw and lived with becoming a part of his ongoing serial. In fact, the tales became so popular they were printed in 1851 as a novel, making him instantly famous. It was then a young playwright by the name of Barrière came to visit Murger in his attic. He wanted the rights to transform the stories into a play. Murger was unusually hesitant, but finally gave his approval. Later when asked why he had hesitated, he said it had been a matter of his not being able to do anything else. According to the apocryphal tale, Murger was in bed when the playwright called, and too shy to get up and shake hands on the deal. He was under the covers because he had loaned his only pair of pants to a friend that day.

A CELEBRATED TEAM

Audiences have little means of knowing the brilliant contribution Puccini's librettists made in their transformation of *La Bohème*. Boldly wrought from Murger's collection of *Scènes*, Giacosa and Illica's libretto had to contend with a series of characters both inconsistent and nonsequential. The writers not so much made an adaptation of Murger as a respinning of his tales from various strands, a description here, an incident there. Here, in a brief outline, are the libretto's sources:

Act One

Life in the attic studio is taken from the stories *Epilogue*; the coming together of the four Bohemians is from the story entitled *The Origin of the Bohemian Club*; plans for a Christmas Eve party with no money, the burning of a chair when there was no wood come from *The Charlemagne Crown*; Rodolfo burning his play is found in *Violets from the North Pole*, while Marcel's painting is lifted from *The Crossing of the Red Sea*; Schaunard's teaching a parrot is likewise taken from *The Toil*



*Costume design from
Maiano prison.*

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of *Graces*; the landlord coming to collect the rent is adapted from *The Cape of Storms*, while his remaining to get drunk and tell tales comes from *Musette's Whims*; Mimi's candle blowing out and Rodolfo helping her is taken from *Francine's Muff*, and Mimi's cold hands comes from *Mademoiselle Mimi*.

Act Two

Christmas Eve at the café is quite different, for it is Colline who stays home to write, Schaunard's date is Euphémie, and it is Barbemuche who willingly pays the bill in *A Café in Bohemia*; Mimi's bonnet comes from *Mimi Wears A Feather*; the willful Musetta is taken from *Mademoiselle Musette* and *Musette's Whims*, while the episode of the tight shoe concerns Louise, and she is unlaced by Rodolphe in *Lenten Loves*; the culminating street parade is again from the *Epilogue*.

Act Three

Mimi and Rodolfo's troubles are adapted from *Mimi Wears A Feather*; Rodolfo's jealousy appears in *Mademoiselle Mimi*.

Act Four

The separations of Musetta from Marcello, Mimi from Rodolfo, and Schaunard from his Euphémie are taken from *Donec Gratus*; Colline selling his overcoat comes from *The Housewarming*, while Mimi requesting her muff is from *Francine's Muff* and her illness and death are from the *Epilogue*.

THE LIBRETTO

Giocosa and Illica by necessity also excised a number of characters and several incidents, among them the lovers who play Romeo and Juliet, eating "the morning lark", which in reality is a pigeon; Rodolfo writing nights to earn money to buy his lady-love violets in winter; and Francine's lover fashioning her death mask as his final sculpture. Further, the *Scènes* were written in a sly, mocking tone, the characters doing all they could to avoid responsibility, their descriptive passages frequently ironic, and the end of the book describing a fat, satisfied Marcel.

Giocosa and Illica formed the first team in Italian opera to co-write a libretto, Illica responsible for the plot, Giacosa the verse. But there was often conflict between the two, for Illica saw the libretto as merely an outline for the composer, while Giacosa saw his verses as sacrosanct and



Costume design from
Maiano prison.

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definitive. So stressed did Giacosa become with Puccini's and Illica's frequent changes, he appealed to Ricordi to allow him to quit *La Bohème*. Similarly, Illica grew upset that his careful structures were often ignored. Ultimately the two were reconciled, and remained as a team with Puccini for his next two successes, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*.

A CHANGE OF HEART

Puccini had a decided manner while composing his operas, liking to assimilate as much of the atmosphere of his subjects as possible, either by seeing the plays upon which his work would be based or reading and listening to native music. In 1894 he went to Sicily to visit Giovanni Verga, the writer of *La lupa* (*The She-Wolf*), a *verismo* opera for which he had already composed some music. He wanted to avail himself of Sicilian folk tunes and atmosphere, but the more he saw and pondered the less he thought of the violent subject matter. It was on the return voyage an incident occurred that definitely made up his mind, however. He met the Contessa Gravina, Wagner's step-daughter, who knew of his *Manon Lescaut* and spoke highly of it. When told what his next subject was going to be, however, she was shocked he would use his talents for so craven a story. It was not long after the composer informed his publisher that he would put *La lupa* aside and concentrate on *La Bohème*.

THE "CAFÉ BOHÈME"

There was an impish side to Puccini's personality that is often not recognised, for he enjoyed practical jokes, made outrageous puns, and gave mocking names to those he disliked. And there was also the "Café Bohème". This was a shed near Torre del Lago where he could get together with the local males and drink and play cards. One of the group has written of those times: 'The construction was rustic and primitive, with a roof of reeds, and near the lake which fronted the house. The furnishings were of stuffed straw, some benches, a couple of stools, and tables of the roughest wood. There were flasks, bottles, and always large slices of prosciutto and salame. The lighting was old lamps hung from the centre.' There are photos of Puccini and the "club members" as well, one showing the composer with his shirt off, his suspenders down, his ample belly exposed, grappling in a pseudo-Roman wrestling pose, a big smile on his face. Hardly the reserved, sophisticated fellow found in his formal photographs.

James Koelker: Last Acts (Opera Companion Publications 2000)



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Puccini's Bohemians

To see *La Bohème* in the clearest light, it is desirable to approach the work through its characters. In Murger they are thinly disguised portraits of real denizens of the *Quartier Latin*.

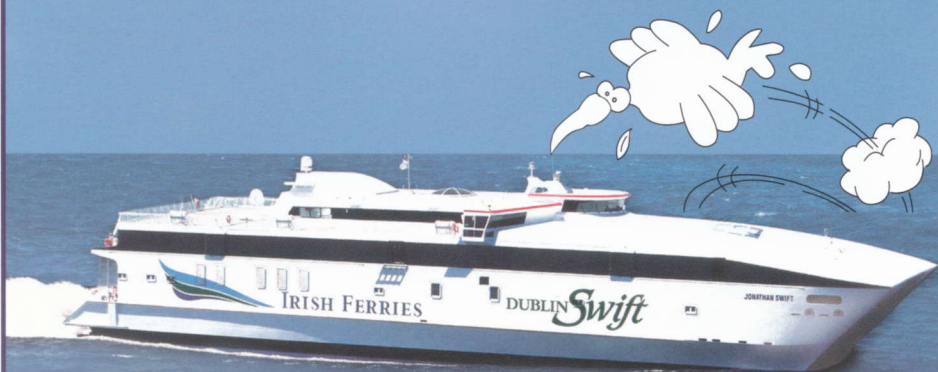
Puccini, in a masterly bit of surgery, has excised the specific and left us the universal residue of these people, their pathos and tragedy immortalised in his music. These more somberde qualities, clothed in exterior gaiety, provided Puccini with just the bittersweet combination that appealed to him. It is the mark of his genius that he completely exploited these characters, subtly making them his own.

MIMI

Mimi is the exception among the heroines of which Puccini was so fond, and for her he lavished much time, care, and sympathy as his letters so markedly bear out. He has drawn Mimi, albeit always in pastel colours, with remarkable variety and completeness. Even in her moments of expansion she conveys a pathetic rather than a tragic mood. Yet the tragedy is all there, but underneath ... implied. By emphasising Mimi's inner qualities of gentleness and helplessness in the face of an inexorable fate, Puccini exploits the inherent pathos of her situation to the utmost.

Puccini, in a masterly bit of surgery, has excised the specific and left us the universal residue of these people, their pathos and tragedy immortalised in his music.

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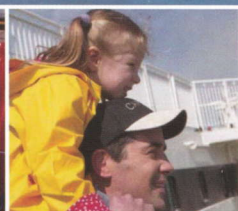
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The mournful way the "Mi chiamano Mimi" theme steals out at the beginning of her "Addio" is just one of many exquisite touches in this scene.

There is not a phrase for Mimi which does not, in some way, explain or develop her character. Puccini made no waste strokes. For example, the expansive "Ma quando vien lo sgelo" episode of her first-act aria gives us an important key to her personality ... her ability to accept a rigorous present by dreaming of a more pleasant future. Her little phrases in the enchanting duet which concludes the first act express to perfection the traits that drive her to seek the only kind of security she knows, an attachment.

The crisis for Mimi is, of course, the scene behind the tree in the third act where Rodolfo, not believing her within earshot, describes her fatal malady to Marcello. The tragic implications of this scene are almost unendurable, but the tenderness and sympathy of Puccini's treatment carry us irresistibly along. A little later, the mournful way the "Mi chiamano Mimi" theme steals out at the beginning of her "Addio" is just one of many exquisite touches in this scene. And, again, in the same aria, the extraordinary change of tint achieved by the modulation from the key of D-flat to A-major heightens the pathos of the moment in a way not apparently possible from such a simple device. And how the emotional tension is increased in the return to the original key in one of those highly charged phrases so characteristic of Puccini!

In the final act, Puccini has given Mimi, with the exception of one or two passages, little new music to sing. The effect achieved by this mass quotation from the first act is that of the dying Mimi, deprived of future, dreaming of the past. The simplicity of means by which Puccini secures his effects in this final scene has seldom been approached. Nothing more poignant could be imagined than Mimi's last words "Qui amor ... sempre con te ... Le mani ... al caldo e ... dormire" sung on a reiterated A-flat with the theme associated with Rodolfo's taking her hand sighed by the orchestra.

MUSETTA

Musetta, on the other hand, presents a different and more difficult problem. In the second and third acts she is drawn as flirtatious and capricious in the extreme, while in the last act she is subdued, solicitous and religious, traits not previously in evidence in her personality. Hence it is no easy task to encompass these separately manifested qualities in a single embodiment. From Musetta's entrance we should feel her



*Costume design from
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hoydenisms arise from good humour rather than petulance. The best-known music for Musetta is her infectious waltz in the second act, especially interesting because, at the reprise of the original melody, Mimi sings a counter theme expressive of her very different nature. In the beginning of the third act, through that chilly scene which expresses the winter of the heart, we hear Musetta again in the measures of her waltz, but how different the effect of these phrases without the original accompaniment and without the bustle of the Café Momus scene! In the final act, the relationship between the goodhearted and the more flamboyant aspects of Musetta can be more readily appreciated if Puccini's carefully worked-out stage directions are more closely observed than is the prevailing custom. For example, Musetta's little prayer, "Madonna benedetta", is to be "unconsciously murmured as she beats the medicine over the spirit lamp"; and then, again, as the curtain falls slowly the directions read, "Terror-stricken, Musetta rushes to the bed, utters a piercing cry of grief." If these directions were more strictly adhered to, as well as the excellent custom employed by the Opéra Comique of casting a dramatic soprano in the role, the varied aspects of Musetta's personality would more readily emerge as a unit.

RODOLFO

Puccini has sketched Rodolfo in less detail than either of the girls. That he is ardent is corroborated by the phrases of the "O soave fanciulla" duet. His charm is at its most persuasive in his first words to Mimi. He shares the carefree sense of humour of his Bohemian comrades. The composer has created in him the perfect foil for Mimi. It is a curious fact that Rodolfo's first phrases, "Nei cieli bigi", were originally to be found among the sketches for an opera on the subject of Verga's *La lupa* which Puccini discarded in favour of the Murger story. The famous narrative, "Che gelida manina", is replete with all the charm and appeal that explain so well the poet's attraction for Mimi. In the third act, Rodolfo's emotional instability is brought out in that curiously sarcastic passage, "Mimi è una civetta", and then genuinely affecting is his account of Mimi's illness and their poverty. In the last act, the duet with Marcello expresses the amorous nostalgia that is such a Puccini speciality. And to Rodolfo is accorded the most heartbreakingly poignant moment in the work: his discovery that Mimi is dead, as the orchestra thunders out the theme of their "Sono andati" duet in the somber key of C-sharp minor.



Costume design from
Mausoleum prison.

Rodolfo is accorded the most heartbreakingly poignant moment in the work: his discovery that Mimi is dead, as the orchestra thunders out the theme of their "Sono andati" duet in the somber key of C-sharp minor.



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In welding into a single unit the emotions of the two who despair and the two who laugh, Puccini does not achieve the marked individuality of expression that is Verdi's but, rather, utilises his material in free fashion in order to wring the utmost from the pathos of the lovers' situation.

MARCELLO

Marcello is an especially appealing character. It is his tragedy to be the realist of the group, and, at the same time, to be susceptible to Musetta's unstable affections. He is the one, however, who is aware of the inevitable conclusion of the affair between Mimi and Rodolfo. There is an unmistakable parallel between the positions of Sharpless [American consul in *Madama Butterfly*] and Marcello because of their wider vision and their acute sense of helplessness to avert the tragedy. In the aforementioned scene behind the tree, in the third act, it is Marcello who is aware that Mimi is overhearing Rodolfo's too candid diagnosis and who vainly tries to drag him away. At the end of the opera, Marcello's choked "Coraggio", which in effect informs Rodolfo of Mimi's death, sketches in a single word Marcello's relation to the tragedy.

In the rest of his characters, Puccini has filled in his canvas with a healthy restraint. Schaunard and Colline contribute to establishing the Bohemian atmosphere with its *joie de vivre* designed to cloak a barren living. Colline's famous song on the pawning of his coat is so skillfully introduced, and so undeniably effective, that only the most sanguine would condemn it as padding the score.

In the quartet which concludes the third act Puccini acknowledges his debt to Verdi by adapting the principle of the famous *Rigoletto* ensemble to his needs. In welding into a single unit the emotions of the two who despair and the two who laugh, Puccini does not achieve the marked individuality of expression that is Verdi's but, rather, utilises his material in free fashion in order to wring the utmost from the pathos of the lovers' situation. It is rare, however, that passages of *La Bohème* lend themselves to such comparison. Puccini's approach to opera is different from that of his predecessors. His music grows as much from the characters as from the situations. His feeling is for characterisation at the personal rather than the detached heroic level, and this is one of Puccini's greatest holds on the public affection.

William Ashbrook



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Maiano prison.*



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Biographies



Fiorella Burato – Soprano (Italy) *Mimi*

Fiorella Burato has sung *Mimi* at the Festival of Torre del Lago as well as in Madrid, Rome, Brescia, Cosenza and Cologne. Other Verdi heroines in her repertoire are Violetta in *La traviata*, which she has sung in Madrid (with Alfredo Kraus), Geneva, Trieste, Udine, Piacenza, St. Gallen, Liège, Wiesbaden, Leipzig, Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Antwerp, Tel Aviv and Istanbul; and Luisa Miller, performed in Amsterdam, Zürich, Edinburgh Festival-Covent Garden, Berlin, Essen, and Antwerp. Her Mozart heroines include Aspasina in *Mitridate* (Geneva and Zürich), Fiordiligi (Milan, Reggio Emilia, Rouen, Tokyo, Santander, Peralada, Wiesbaden, Caen, Nancy, Rome, Baden-Baden and Moscow), Donna Anna in Mannheim and Donna Elvira in Bonn. Other recent and future projects include Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra* in Tel Aviv, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* in Palermo, Fiordiligi in Beijing, Violetta in Dijon, Luisa Miller in Essen and Leipzig. Next up comes another Elvira in Bonn, Fiordiligi in Barcelona, and Lucia di Lammermoor and Verdi's Desdemona in Dijon.

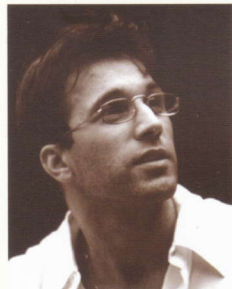


Massimo Cavalletti – Baritone (Italy) *Marcello*

Massimo Cavalletti was born in Lucca in 1978. He studied with Graziano Polidori and also attended the Giacomo Puccini School of Music in La Spezia. His earliest roles were Giorgio Germont in *La traviata*, in which he made his debut in Milan, and Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*. In October 2004 he made his debut at Teatro Donizetti in Bergamo in Donizetti's *Parisina* in a production directed by Tiziano Severini. He made his debut at Teatro alla Scala in Milan as Schaunard in *La Bohème*, in the famous Franco Zeffirelli staging. His other roles at La Scala have been the title role of Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, conducted by Enrique Mazzola, and Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* conducted by Roberto Abbado. Upcoming engagements include further Enricos in performances of *Lucia* in Bergamo and Tokyo; Puccini's Marcello for his debut in Zurich; Rossini's Figaro in Turin; and Belcore in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* at the Glyndebourne Festival.

Andrea Giovannini – Tenor (Italy) *Rodolfo*

Andrea Giovannini made his operatic debut as Danilo in *The Merry Widow* in a Toscanini Foundation production. This was followed by Belfiore in Mozart's *La finta giardiniera*, conducted by Claudio Desderi in Ferrara. Other important engagements include *Peer Gynt* at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; Leopold in *White Horse Inn* at the Operetta Festival in Trieste; Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Polino in *Il matrimonio segreto* in Teatro Massimo, Palermo. He sang Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* at Teatro Piccini, Bari, Teatro Piccolo Milano and toured with this production to Madrid and Bilbao and Danilo at Teatro Verdi, Salerno. In December 2004 he had his debut as Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* with Maestro Desderi. Most recent and future projects include Idreno in Rossini's *Semiramide* for Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Alfredo in *La traviata* for Oper Nürnberg and Opéra Dijon as well as Il Conte Bosco Nero in Wolf-Ferrari's *La vedova scaltra* for Opéra de Nice.



Alessia Grimaldi – Soprano (Italy) *Musetta*

The Italian soprano Alessia Grimaldi received her diploma at San Pietro a Majella Conservatory in Naples and later studied at the Academy at La Scala in Milan. She made her debut in 2004 as Serpina in Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* at Palazzo Rele in Milan and as the child Cis in Britten's *Albert Herring* at Teatro Rendano in Cosenza. In 2005 she made her debut at Teatro alla Scala in the role of Prilepa in Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* under the direction of Yuri Temirkanof. She also appeared at La Scala in Handel's *Rinaldo* conducted by Ottavio Dantone. In addition to her operatic roles, she has taken part in concerts and recitals at La Scala too. In September and October 2005 she sang Rosina in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at La Scala and repeated the role in June for the company's season at Milan's Arcimboldi Theatre. In December 2006 she will sing Rosina again in Mantua.





P J Hurley – Tenor (Ireland) *Parpignol*

P J Hurley was born in Clare and began his vocal studies with Olive Cowper in Limerick. In The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama he studied with Mary Brennan and Robert Alderson. P.J. frequently performs with RTE radio and television. In The National Concert Hall he has sung Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Fenton (*Falstaff*), Rodolfo (*La Boheme*), Alfredo (*La Traviata*), The Duke (*Rigoletto*) and the title role in *Don Carlo*. With Anna Livia Opera P.J. has sung in productions of *Faust* and *Il Tabarro*. His previous Opera Ireland productions include *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *Jenufa* and the role of Borsa in *Rigoletto*. P.J. recently made his UK operatic debut as Rodolfo in *La Boheme* and his New York debut in Carnegie Hall in a tribute to Frank Patterson. He recently sang in Mozart's *Coronation Mass* in Vienna and represented Ireland at The Belvedere International Singing Competition. Future engagements include Mozart's *Requiem* in Galway.



Steffen Kubach – Baritone (Germany) *Schaunard*

Steffen Kubach, who made his Opera Ireland debut as Papageno last year, was born in Waiblingen, near Stuttgart, in 1971. He studied at the Mannheim University of Music and Performing Arts with Rudolf Piernay and took part in masterclasses with Christa Ludwig, Walter Berry, Thomas Quasthoff, Francisco Araiza, Daniel Ferro and others. He won second prize at the International Erika Köth Singing Competition in Neustadt/Weinstrasse and received scholarships from institutions such as the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the Richard Wagner association and the Art Foundation "Rems-Murr-Kreissparkassen". Since 2000 he has been a house principal at Lubeck Opera singing such roles as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, Albert in *Werther* and Molina in *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*. He has also made guest appearances at Aachen Opera.

Paolo Pecchioli – Bass (Italy) *Colline*

A regular performer at major opera houses since 1992, his repertoire includes Verdi's Conte Walter, Ramfis, King, Attila, Silva and Ferrando; Rossini's Assur, Basilio, Bartolo, Alidoro and Orbazzano; Bellini's Conte Rodolfo and Giorgio Walton; Mozart's Don Alfonso, Leporello, Masetto, Don Giovanni and Figaro; and Donizetti's Raimondo, Dulcamara and Don Pasquale. In 2000 he made his American debut at Carnegie Hall as Gaudenzio in *Il Signor Bruschino*. He has also sung Cardinel Campeggio in Saint-Saëns' *Henry VIII* opposite Caballé in Barcelona's Liceu, Talpa in *Il tabarro* under Chailly in Milan, and Don Prudenzi in Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims* directed by Dario Fo in Genova. He made his Washington debut as Alidoro in 2004 and also sang it under Rizzi in Munich. His most recent debuts were Rossini's Mustafa in Novara and Assur in Pisa, for which he received great acclaim from both the public and critics. In 2001 he sang the King in *Aida* filmed by Zeffirelli in Busetto.



Gerard O'Connor – Bass (Ireland) *Benoit and Alcindoro*

Born in Galway, Gerard O'Connor has sung companies including English National Opera, Opera Ireland, Opera North, Castleward Opera, Chelsea Opera Group, Garsington Opera, Lyric Opera, Dublin, Opera Holland Park, Singapore Lyric Opera and Stanley Hall Opera, as well as at the Edinburgh and Wexford Festivals and at the RTÉ Proms. His repertoire has included Abbott / Curlew River, Snug, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Raimondo, Lucia di Lammermoor, Priam, The Trojans, Dulcamara, L'elisir d'amore, Zuniga, Carmen, Dikoi, Katya Kabanova, Cieco, Iris, Sarastro, Die Zauberflöte, Varlaam, Boris Godunov, Don Basilio, Il barbiere di Siviglia, Alidoro, La cenerentola, Boris, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, Frank, Die Fledermaus, Croucher, The Silver Tassie, The Mayor, Cherevichki, Sparafucile, Rigoletto, Fafner, Das Rheingold & Siegfried, Reinmar, Tannhäuser, King Marke, Tristan und Isolde and Hunding, Die Walküre. Most recently for Opera Ireland, he has sung Mephistopheles in Faust.





Alexander Anissimov (Belorussia) *Conductor*

Alexander Anissimov made his Opera Ireland debut with *Macbeth* in 1997 and has since conducted *Cav & Pag*, *Boris Godunov*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and *Tosca*. In 1980 he became principal conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre, Belarus and in 2001 of the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Belarus. He is currently principal conductor of Opera Rostov-on-the-Don. He has also conducted at the Mariinsky in St Petersburg and the Bolshoi in Moscow as well in opera houses and concert halls in North and South America, Australia, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and all over Europe. He has conducted at Wexford Festival, From 1998 to 2001 he was principal conductor of the RTÉ NSO, of which he is now Conductor Emeritus. In 2002 he conducted Wagner's *Ring* cycle in concert with the NYOI in Limerick and Birmingham. In 2001 he was conferred by the NUI as a Doctor of Music *honoris causa* in recognition of his contribution to the musical life of Ireland.



Porzia Addabbo (Italy) *Director*

Born in Rome, Porzia Addabbo studied direction at the Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica Silvio d'Amico and History of Theatre at Università La Sapienza. Eugenio Barba encouraged her to develop her playwriting and, in 1993, she won Paolo Stoppa Prize for writing and directing *Palcoscenico Cercasi*. Other productions include *La calandria del Cardinal Bibbiena*, *L'Amleto non si può fare*, *Ditirambo di Bacco in Toscana*, *Ubu Roy* and *Il palladio conservato*. In 1999 she won the Critics' Prize for the short film *Eccesso d'amore*. She has worked closely with Giancarlo Menotti at his Festival of Two Worlds and directed the filming of *Cinco puertas*, *The Brutal Telling*, *The Saint of Bleecker Street* and *La valse des adieux*. She wrote and directed *Verdi appeso a un filo*, which won the prize for best documentary in the Verdi anniversary year. In 2004, combining her interest in anthropological theatre and *cinema verité* she shot the award-winning film *Bohème at Maiano Prison* produced by the Province of Perugia.

Michele Zualdi (Italy) *Set design supervisor*

Spoletto-born Michele Zualdi studied at Leoncillo Leonardi Art Institute, graduated at Perugia's Academy of Fine Arts Pietro Vannucci and did his postgraduate work at Krakow's Academy of Fine Arts Stuck Pieknych. He collaborated with Giancarlo Menotti at his Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto. His productions include *Cip e il suo cane*, *The Consul* and *Opening Concert Paints* with Emanuele Luzzati. He also collaborated with Mario Mirabassi of the World Association of Puppetry Theatre, where he designed the set for the opera *Pinocchio*. Recent design credits include *Historie du soldat Chieti* and *Rifiuti Umani* in Rome, *I fisici di Durensmatt* at Teatro Stabile dell'Umbria and a collaboration with Pupi Avati for designing the film *I cavalieri che compirono l'impresa*. He designed the sets for the short film *Gli strizzati* and painted the set for the opening of the Winter Olympic Games in Turin this year. He has also collaborated with Spoleto's Teatro Lirico Sperimentale on *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.



Tina MacHugh (UK) *Lighting designer*

Tina MacHugh's opera credits include: *Apollo and Hyacinthus* (OTC/ Classical Opera); *Alicia* and *Falstaff* (English Touring Opera); *00:00:00:00: Time Code* (ROH, Clore Studio); *Idomeneo* with Plácido Domingo (Los Angeles Opera); *Vera of Las Vegas* (OTC); *The Turn of the Screw* (Wilton's); *Il re pastore* (Opera North); *The Juniper Tree* (Munich Biennale/Almeida Opera); *Idomeneo* and *Le contes d'Hoffmann* (De Vlaamse Opera). Her dance credits include productions for Geneva Ballet, Arc Dance, Houston Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, London Contemporary Dance Theatre, English National Ballet, Rambert Dance Company and Adventures in Motion Pictures. Current productions include: *The Grapes of Wrath* (Clwyd Theatre Cymru); *The Way Home* (Liverpool Everyman); *Ubu Roi* (Galway Arts Festival) and *The Alice Trilogy* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin). She was nominated for an Olivier Award for her work on *Rutherford and Sons* (NT) and *Ghosts* (RSC), and an Irish Times/ESB Award for *Book of Evidence* (Gate Theatre/ Kilkenny), and has worked extensively in the UK both regionally and in the West End.



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Cathal Garvey (Ireland) *Chorus master*

Cathal Garvey made his Opera Ireland debut with *Boris Godunov* in 1999 and has since worked on over thirty operas including, *Aida*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Flying Dutchman*, *Silver Tassie*, *Don Carlo*, *Carmen*, *Queen of Spades*, *Andrea Chenier*, *Jenufa*, *Rigoletto* and *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Born in Cork, he studied violin and piano at the Cork School of Music, completed a Masters Degree in Conducting at UCC and did two years of further study at Moscow Conservatory. He is Musical Director of the Dun Laoghaire Choral Society and from 2001 - 2006 was Principal Conductor of the Dublin Orchestral Players. He has recently conducted the NSO, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Cecilia, the Ulysses Orchestra, the Irish Sinfonia, the Dublin Baroque Players and the RIAM Wind Ensemble. He conducted IORC's *Me and My Girl*, *Oliver* and *Oklahoma* in Cork and Dublin, and *Broadway Classics* in the NCH. He has also acted as Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor for Opera Theatre Company, Opera South, Lyric Opera, and Anna Livia Opera.



Dearbhla Collins (Ireland) *Répétiteur*

Dearbhla Collins, who prepared *Jenůfa*, *Imeneo* and *La Cenerentola* for Opera Ireland, is a highly-regarded solo pianist, chamber musician and vocal coach who has performed throughout Europe, Japan and the USA. She was RTÉ Musician of the Future in 1987 and has won awards at the Palm Beach Invitational Competition (1993) and the 1991 and 1994 AXA Dublin International Piano Competition. In recent years she has specialised in the song repertoire, partnering singers like Bernadette Greevy, Regina Nathan, Robin Tritschler, Franzita Whelan, Detlef Roth, Lynda Lee and Sam McElroy. She teaches piano at the RIAM where she was John O'Connor's teaching assistant for four years. Last year she directed the Dublin Hugo Wolf Festival and this year worked with the Austrian Embassy in co-ordinating the Mozart 250th celebrations. She is currently Administrator of the Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition and opera consultant to the RDS's Irish "Ring" project. In 1998 she recorded a CD, *Romancing Rebellion* with Kathleen Tynan.



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Carolyn Steffen (Germany) Assistant director

Born in 1976 in Gelsenkirchen, Carolyn Steffen is a qualified ladies' tailor. She graduated in 2000 from the Ruhr University in Bochum, in Theatre, Film & Television and German Studies. Her practical experience includes choreographing *Cabaret* in 1996 and directing *Frühlings Erwachen* in 1999. She was engaged from 1999 to 2005 at the Musiktheater im Revier, Gelsenkirchen, as Assistant Director and Stage Manager. Here she has worked on a varied repertoire including Mozart's Da Ponte operas and *Die Zauberflöte* with Dietrich Hilsdorf, *Rigoletto* with Immo Karaman, *Fidelio* with Gabriele Rech and *Parsifal* with Rosamund Gilmore. Carolyn Steffen has worked on several occasions with Dieter Kaegi in Gelsenkirchen and elsewhere, including Theater Lübeck, Opera Ireland (*Eine florentinische Tragödie/ Gianni Schicchi*) and Opéra Royal De Wallonie, Liège. Recently she has worked with Joachim Rathke on *La traviata* (Dublin and Aachen) and *Un giorno di regno* (St Moritz). This summer she became a member of Opern Festival St. Moritz.



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Tenors:

Andrew Boushell, PJ Hurley, Colm Lalor, Sean Loftus, Niall McGrath, Andrew Nangle, Wojciech Smarkala, Ian Whyte

Bass:

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Book: National Concert Hall • Tel: 01 417 0000 • www.nch.ie



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Pamela Forde
Eileen Comer
Sunniva Fitzpatrick
Ruth Murphy
Sebastien Petier
Katie O'Connor
Nicole Hudson

Violin II

Elizabeth Leonard
Anne Phelan
Carol Quigley
Arthur McIver
Donal Roche
Orla NiBhraoin

Viola

David Kelts
Elizabeth O'Neill
Hanora Farrell
Anna Smith

Cello

David James
Hilary O'Donovan
Leonie Adams
Helen Isaac

Double Bass

Liam Wylie
Rory Dempsey

Flute

Deirdre Brady
Mairead English
Ann Macken

Oboe

Peter Healy
David Agnew
Rebecca Halliday

Clarinet

Michael Seaver

Jean Duncan
Ruth Hickey

Bassoon

John Leonard
Carole Block

French Horn

Fearghal O Ceallachain
Jacquiline McCarthy
Andre Cavanagh
Enda Collins

Trumpet

Shaun Hooke
Will Palmer
Jane Hilliard

Trombones

Stephen Mathieson
David Weakley
Jonathan Clifford

Bass Trombone

Mark McLaughlin

Harp

Jean Kelly

Timpani

Daniel Bertschi

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Massimo Marraccini
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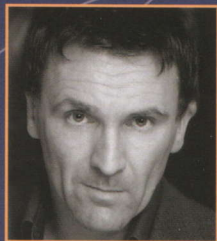
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Mother Goose

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Wendler 1967 1977

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus

Così fan tutte 1950 1993
Don Giovanni 1943 2003
Idomeneo 1956
Die Entführung aus dem Serail 1949 1964
Le Nozze di Figaro 1942 1997
Die Zauberflöte 1990 2005

Mussorgsky, Modest

Bois Godunov 1999

O

Offenbach, Jacques

Les contes d'Hoffmann 1945 1998

P

Puccini, Amilcare

La Gioconda 1944 1984

Puccini, Giacomo

La Bohème 1996 2006
Gianni Schicchi 1962 2005
Madama Butterfly 1942 2000
Manon Lescaut 1958 1991
Sant'Angelica 1962
Tosca 1941 2004
Turandot 1957 1986

Previn, André

A Streetcar Named Desire 2006

R

Refice, Lufino

Cecilia 1954

Rossini, Gioachino

Il barbiere di Silviglia 1942 1999
La Cenerentola 1972 2006
L'italiana in Algeri 1978 1992

S

Saint-Saëns, Camille

Samson et Dalila 1942 1979

Shostakovich, Dmitri

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 2000

Smetana, Bedrich

The Bartered Bride 1953 1976

Strauss, Johann

Die Fledermaus 1962 1998
Der Zigeunerbaron 1964 1997

Strauss, Richard

Der Rosenkavalier 1964 1984
Salome 1999

T

Thomas, Ambroise

Mignon 1966 1973

Tchaikovsky, Peter Ilich

Eugene Onegin 1969 1997
The Queen of Spades 1972 2002

Turnage, Mark-Anthony

The Silver Tassie 2001

V

Verdi, Giuseppe

Aida 1942 2000
Un ballo in maschera 1949 1992
Don Carlo 1950 2001
Ernani 1965 1978
Falstaff 1960 1998
La forza del destino 1951 1973
Macbeth 1963 1997
Nabucco 1962 1986
Otello 1946 1981
Rigoletto 1941 2004
Simon Boccanegra 1956 1974
La traviata 1999 2005
Il trovatore 1941 1995

Victory, Gerard

Music Hath Mischief 1968

W

Wagner, Richard

Der fliegende Holländer 1946 2001
Lohengrin 1971 1983
Tannhäuser 1943 1977
Tristan und Isolde 1953 1963
Die Walküre 1956

Wolf-Ferrari, Ermanno

Il segreto di Susanna 1956

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Top: *Idomeneo*, 2005

Below: *The Magic Flute*, 2005

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